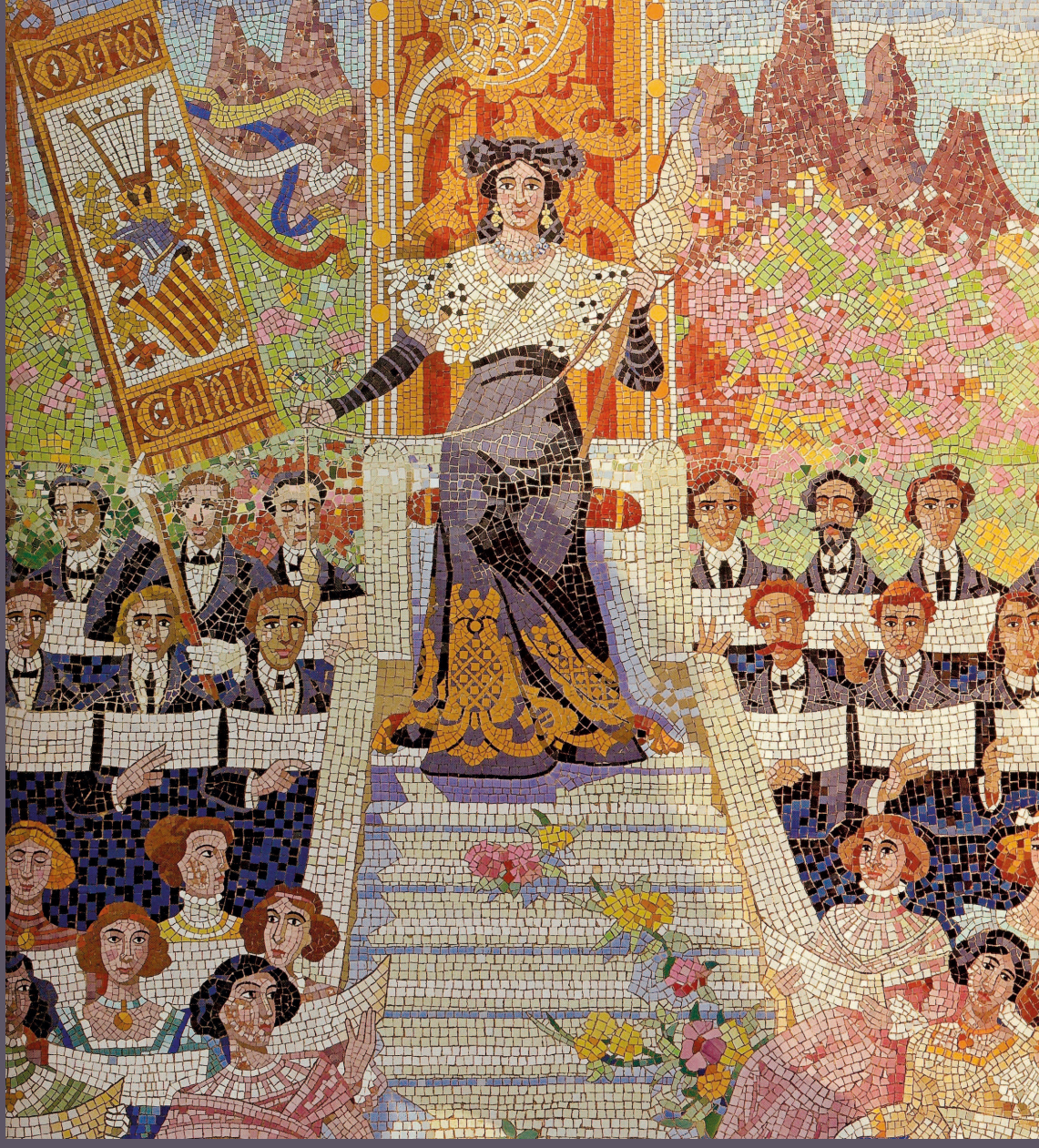

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Edenda curavit
Björn R. Tammen
cum Antonio Baldassarre, Cristina Bordas,
Gabriela Currie, Nicoletta Guidobaldi
atque Philippe Vendrix

Guest editorial
Anne Leonard & Tim Shephard

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Huub van der Linden

Opera and Porcelain in Eighteenth-Century Germany: Hasse, Bordoni, and some Meissen Figure Groups*

The connection between material culture and celebrity is well established in modern society: objects with images of singers and actors — ranging from t-shirts to pens, and from coffee mugs to action figures — have become a staple of the public discourse around celebrity.[1] The beginnings of this material side of celebrity culture lie in the eighteenth century, during the time, that is, when the development towards a consumer culture fostered a growing appetite for 'things', and the rise of the public sphere brought an increased level of public discourse that aided notions of celebrity and notoriety.[2]

One of the most distinctly modern developments in this regard was the shaping of a culture of celebrity expressed not only textually, but also through objects. Besides relatively high-brow artefacts such as portrait paintings and busts, more mundane objects testify how eighteenth-century audiences had started to surround themselves with their best-loved actors and actresses: statuettes, ceramic tiles, cane heads, and other objects could all carry the likenesses of these celebrities.[3] Most work in this area has been done on celebrity culture in relation to the English stage, but also some late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century German cases have received attention.[4] Instead, this article takes a look at mid eighteenth-century Germany, and more in particular at some Meissen porcelain figure groups and their association with Johann Adolf Hasse, his wife Faustina Bordoni, and opera productions in Dresden. The identification of fragments of arias from operas by Hasse — some of which sung by Bordoni at the time — adds a new perspective to the public status and celebrity of both this music and those who created it.

1. Hasse's operas and Meissen porcelain

The Royal Porcelain Manufactury at Meissen in Saxony was founded in 1710 after the secret procedure for the production of hard-paste porcelain, until that time unknown in

* I am grateful to Alessandra Campana for her comments on earlier versions of this article and to Furio Rinaldi for help in obtaining some of the illustrations.

1 For overviews on celebrity see e.g. Inglis 2010 and Rojek 2001, and on eighteenth-century opera stars Joncus 2007.

2 See among others Marshall 1997: 6, for the observation that "celebrity acknowledges a new sense of the public sphere", and Rojek 2001: 12, 19.

3 Notable collections of such objects are e.g. in the Victoria & Albert Museum in London and the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, DC. On portraiture see e.g. the exhibition catalogue Postle 2005, which explicitly revolved around this topic.

4 For England see the overview in Wanko 2011. Specifically on porcelain and celebrity in England see McPherson 2010 and 2014. With regard to porcelain and opera in Germany see Hortschansky 1994 for depictions of opera scenes on porcelain, and Summerville 2003 for a similar case regarding performances in Berlin of Anton Radziwiłł's setting of scenes from Goethe's *Faust*.

Europe, had at long last been cracked by a team of alchemists.[5] With the support of the Elector of Saxony (and King of Poland) Frederic August I—and despite the fact that the *arcanum*, as the secret production technique was referred to, was quickly leaked—the firm soon produced a wealth of porcelain. It was famed for, among other things, its exquisite dinner services and porcelain statuettes. The latter tended to depict figures from the *commedia dell'arte*, scenes of love-making and courtship, figures in exotic dress, and animals.[6] Many of the best figures were sculpted by Johann Joachim Kändler (1706–75). Much of his work can be dated through periodic work reports and a so-called *Taxa* (record) of pieces that he had made since 1740.[7] The pieces listed in this *Taxa* but not in Kändler's work reports were probably made in his free time.[8]

Often, popular statuettes were remodelled and produced anew at different moments in time. Also their painted decorations tend to differ from piece to piece. While the first of those characteristics renders dating these objects sometimes more difficult, the second can actually help. That is to say: at times the painted decoration includes topical references to events at or around the court, including musical ones, that can be pinpointed fairly precisely. For instance, in one version of a pair of shepherds in which the woman holds a lute-like instrument and the man a sheet of music, this sheet is reportedly headed "Aria aus Demetrio".[9] This refers probably to Johann Adolf Hasse's opera *Demetrio*, which was first staged in Venice in 1732, and then revised for performances in Dresden in January 1740 (with Faustina singing the part of Cleonice in both productions).[10] It may well be that this particular version of the piece was made on the occasion of those Dresden performances.[11]

Another such reference to an opera by Hasse appears on a figure group of which the present whereabouts are unknown, but that was described in the collection of Georg Hirth in 1898. It reportedly showed a seated woman leaning against a laurel tree, with a laurel crown on her head and her right arm resting on a book with the title "Poesies 1743", while her right hand supported her head. On her right thigh stood a lyre that she held with her left hand, and she gazed at a sheet of music reportedly entitled "Lucio Papirio –

5 For a more nuanced account of the European (re)invention of porcelain see Schönfeld 1998. For an overview of the firm's output see Röntgen 1996.

6 Relevant in the present context is for instance an early eighteenth-century service with *commedia dell'arte* figures, see Wildtraut and Buchen 1997. See on the visual sources for porcelain Ducret 1973, and Cassidy-Geiger 1996.

7 An edition of the work reports is Pietsch 2002. The *Taxa* is at the archive of the Staatliche Porzellan-Manufaktur Meissen. A transcription was first published in Pfeiffer 1924, and a new one is provided in Rafael 2009, who showed it was written by Johann Gottlob Bachmann rather than Kändler himself. I am grateful to prof. dr. Ulrich Pietsch, director of the porcelain collection at the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, for making me aware of the *Taxa*.

8 Pietsch 2002: 9, for the status of the works mentioned in the *Taxa*.

9 According to the catalogue entry in Jedding 1982: 203, nr. 212, where the music on the sheet is not visible. Considering the other examples discussed below it seems more likely the sheet did not actually have the word "aus".

10 On the opera see Schmidt-Hensel 2009, II: 253–323.

11 Possibly it is the group mentioned in the work reports in autumn of that year: "Das Sänger Croppgen zerschnitten und zum abformen befördert" (Pietsch 2002: 72). The figure was certainly (also) produced in February 1744 (ibid., 101 and 141 for an illustration).

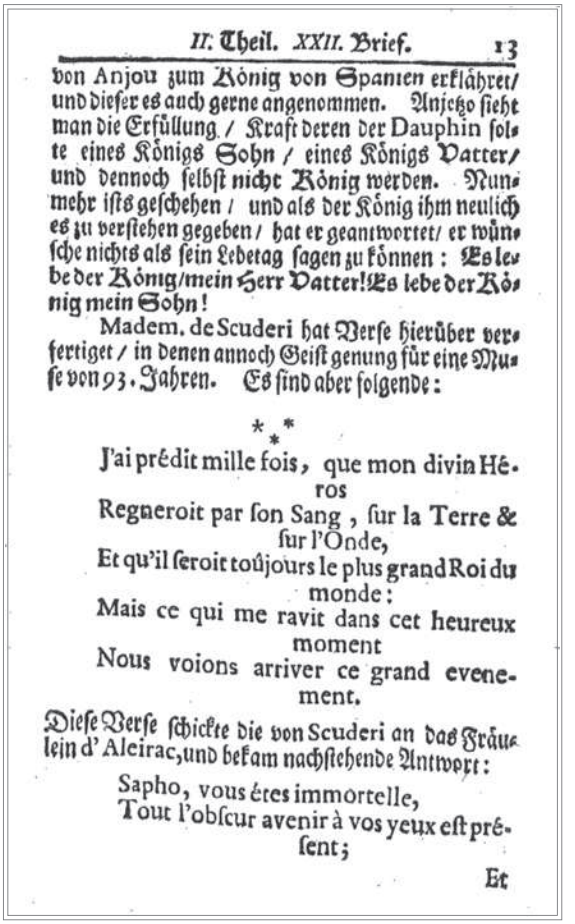
Sigt. [*sic*, probably: Sig.ra] Faustina".[12] Hasse's *Lucio Papirio*, on a libretto by Apostolo Zeno, received its first performance at the court theatre in Dresden on 18 January 1742, and Faustina sang the part of the title character's daughter Papiria.[13] It seems clear, therefore, that on this piece a fragment from an aria sung by Faustina in this opera was depicted.

The group also included a small *putto* sitting at the woman's feet that held a sheet in its hand on which the following verses were written:

> J'ai prédit mille fois que mon héros
> Régneroit par son Sang, sur la Terre sur l'Onde
> Et qu'il seroit toujours le plus grand Roi du monde:
> Mais ce qui me ravit dans cet heureux moment
> Nous voyons arriver ce grand événement.

These lines were written by the poetess Madeleine de Scudéry (1607–1701), and they were quoted in a printed collection of letters by Anne Marguerite Petit Du Noyer (1663–1719). Several editions of this book are known, including a French edition from 1733 and a German translation from 1712–15, both of which may have been known in Dresden. Crucially, the latter retained the original French text of the various verses cited in the letters (*fig. 1*).[14] Petit Du Noyer's letter related the death of the Spanish king Charles II in 1700, and his nomination of Louis XIV's grandson Philip of Anjou as his successor. De Scudéry's poem was a reaction to these events.

The reported date of 1743 on this piece is probably the year of its creation.[15] Given the original context of the poem, in 1743 De Scudéry's text was perhaps intended to refer to



II. Theil. XXII. Brief. 13

von Anjou zum König von Spanien erkläret/ und dieser es auch gerne angenommen. Anjetzo sieht man die Erfüllung / Kraft deren der Dauphin solte eines Königs Sohn / eines Königs Vatter/ und dennoch selbst nicht König werden. Nunmehr ists geschehen / und als der König ihm neulich es zu verstehen gegeben / hat er geantwortet/ er wünsche nichts als sein Lebetag sagen zu können: Es lebe der König/mein Herr Vatter! Es lebe der König mein Sohn!

Madem. de Scuderi hat Verse hierüber verfertiget / in denen annoch Geist genung für eine Muse von 93. Jahren. Es sind aber folgende:

* * *

J'ai prédit mille fois, que mon divin Héros
Regneroit par son Sang, sur la Terre & sur l'Onde,
Et qu'il seroit toûjours le plus grand Roi du monde:
Mais ce qui me ravit dans cet heureux moment
Nous voions arriver ce grand evenement.

Diese Verse schickte die von Scuderi an das Fräulein d'Aleirac, und bekam nachstehende Antwort:

Sapho, vous êtes immortelle,
Tout l'obscur avenir à vos yeux est présent;

Et

fig. 1: Anne Marguerite Petit Du Noyer, *Die galante Correspondentz in historischen und galanten Briefen* (1712), vol. 2, p. 13.
Photo: © Göttingen, Niedersächsische Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek

12 Hirth 1898: 1.

13 On the opera see Schmidt-Hensel 2009, II: 567–85.

14 See respectively Petit Du Noyer 1733: 18, and 1712: 13.

15 Although the piece is described as the muse Euterpe in the Hirth catalogue, it seems to be a variation on a figure from 1743 representing Poetry that is listed in the *Taxa*, see Rafael 2009: 54, nr. 105: "1. Groupgen, die Poësie vorstellend, in Gestalt eines in speculativen Gedanken sizendes Frauenzimmers, in der eine Hand die Harffe des Apollo haltend, nebst einem Kindgen, so eine Posaune bläset, ingl. noch einem Kindgen, welches Verse lieset, 12 Thlr." Also the word "Poesies" on the piece points in this direction.

the death of the powerful cardinal Fleury in January of that year, after which Louis XV took direct control of government: the finally arrived "grand événement" when the king would reign. Hence, the piece was likely intended for a French (or Francophile) customer.[16] The combination of Dresden porcelain and a French subject may have had something to do with the War of the Austrian Succession (1740–48), which had pitted France against Saxony and other German states, but no clear event or diplomatic effort stands out as the most likely event. In any case, it remains unclear what we are to make of the inclusion of the names of Faustina Bordoni and the opera *Lucio Papirio*. Even if the piece was some sort of diplomatic gift, it is difficult to imagine why either she or the opera should have been mentioned, apart from the simple fact of Hasse's and Bordoni's celebrity.[17]

2. The monkey band

Further references to Hasse operas come from exemplars of the well-known Meissen monkey band *(Affenkapelle)*, a group of anthropomorphic monkeys engaged in musical performance (*fig. 2*). The earliest known reference is a record from 1753 when the Mar-

fig. 2: *The monkey band*. Royal Meissen Porcelain Factory, possibly 1766. Rhode Island School of Design Museum, inv. 55.169.1; bequest of Miss Lucy T. Aldrich.
Photo: © by Erik Gould, courtesy of the Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence

quise de Pompadour in Paris bought "dix-neuf figures de Saxe formant un concert de singes avec les instruments" from a local merchant. Since the monkey band does not appear in Kändler's different surviving work records, it has been assumed that they were first made at some point around 1750.[18] Its subject has been connected to the Saxon prime minister count Heinrich von Brühl, a patron of music as well as an important collector of Meissen porcelain.[19] Yet this date is complicated by at least one surviving set, now in the museum of the Rhode Island School of Design. It comprises four music stands, two of which have music with a "Menuet Basso", another one with an "Aria", and the fourth one has music in soprano clef and, once more, the title "Lucio Papirio" (*figs. 3a–c*).

16 It may be significant that not long before the figure of Poetry a piece was made "vor den König in Franckreich" (Rafael 2009: 54, nr. 102).

17 It may be significant that a copy of the libretto for the 1742 Dresden performances of *Lucio Papirio* is in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (Arsenal, 8-BL-7574).

18 Den Blaauwen 1961: 21–23. The set included a music stand. No reports exist between 1748 and 1764 except for a short list of pieces from 1755.

19 On the possible connection to Von Brühl see Van Gerdinge 1981.

figs. 3a–c: Details of three of the four music stands (part of the group shown in fig. 2).
Photo: © by Erik Gould, courtesy of the Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence

The music on this last music stand corresponds to the violin part of the instrumental introduction to the aria "Già nell'alma ritorna la calma" from Hasse's *Lucio Papirio*, the opera already mentioned above. The aria was a number from act II for Papiria, sung by Faustina (*fig. 4*). This connection to Faustina may have been (part of) the reason this music was chosen, although from the surviving musical sources there is no evidence that this particular aria was especially popular.[20] The music on the other music stands does not seem to derive from this opera, and both fragments remain unidentified for now.[21]

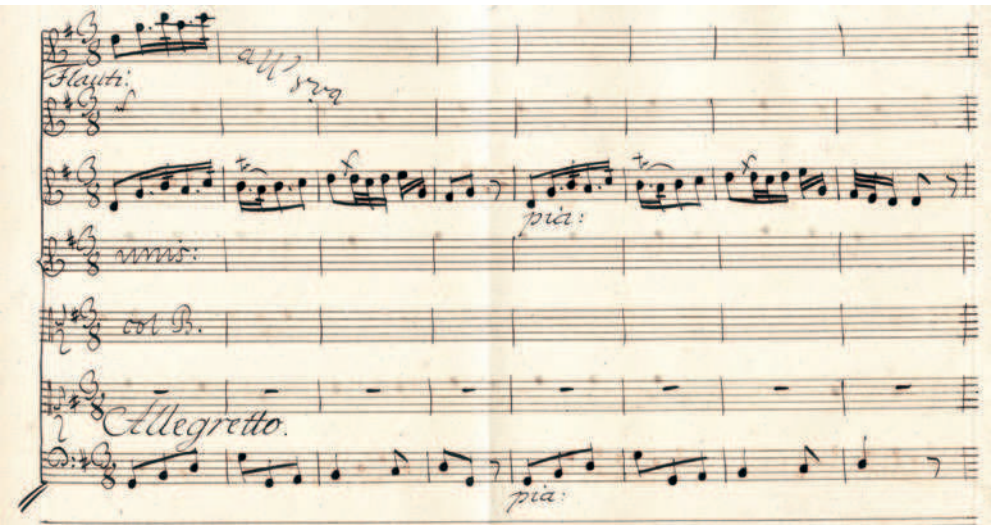



fig. 4: J. A. Hasse, *Lucio Papirio*, excerpt from the beginning of the aria "Già nell'alma ritorna la calma". D-Dl Mus. 2477-F-32, act II, p. 92.
Photo: © Sächsische Landesbibliothek – Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Dresden

Given the direct relation of at least one music stand to Hasse's *Lucio Papirio*, the possibility that this version of the monkey band was made as early as 1742 should not be completely discounted (despite there being no record in Kändler's work reports or the *Taxa*). However, this version is perhaps more likely connected to the performances of *Lucio Papirio* in Berlin in 1766, particularly because we know that between August 1765 and February 1766 many of the monkey musicians were produced again in the Meissen factory.[22] If so, the older musical sources from Dresden were used for its decoration, because in the Berlin production "Già nell'alma" was actually transposed up to B-flat Major and would therefore have looked different.[23]

That the decoration of these figures was adapted for different sets is also clear from comparisons. For instance, a version of the monkey band that passed through auction at Christie's in 2002 also included a music stand, but this time the sheet of music has the word "aria" and three staves of music in soprano clef which I have been unable to

20 Schmidt-Hensel 2009, II: 573.

21 The music does not come from any of Hasse's operas first produced between 1730 and 1745, as appears from the incipits provided in Schmidt-Hensel 2009, but it may come from later operas or revised versions of these earlier ones. An incipit search in the online RISM database has also not yielded a match.

22 Pietsch 2002: 149–51 , and Charleston 1971: 182–94.

23 Schmidt-Hensel 2009, II: 584. Another, less likely, connection could be a 1744 performance in Braunschweig. In 1766 Papiria was sung by Giovanna Gasparini.

identify. The music may derive from another (Hasse) opera performed in Dresden.[24] Another set, from the collection of Hannah Gubbay and now on display at Clandon Park in England, includes three music stands. One has a "Menuet" for what seems to read "cornu p[ri]mo", while the two others show slightly different versions of an "Aria" (*figs. 5a/b*). The rhythm and tonality of the menuet is not very clear. The staff does not have a clear clef at the beginning, and although it appears to show two sharps, their position does not correspond with a violin clef, which would normally be used for a horn part.

The aria on the other two music stands, however, is more precise, and can in fact be identified as music that Hasse used in two different operas. The music first appeared in *Catone in Utica*, an opera staged in Turin in 1732, with the words "Che legge spietata, che sorte crudele". This was as an aria for Arbace, sung by Farinelli in that production.[25] Hasse used the same music almost contemporaneously in the 1732 version of *Demetrio*—the opera mentioned at the beginning of this article—with the words "Fra tanti pensieri di regno e d'amore" as an aria for Cleonice, sung by Bordoni (*fig. 6*). When that opera was revived in Dresden in 1740, one of the numerous revisions that Hasse made was the new setting of this aria text. However, although the 1732 version of this aria was not re-used for the Dresden production, the earlier music did circulate there, because it survives in an aria collection that contains music from both versions of *Demetrio*.[26]

figs. 5a/b: Details of two of the three music stands of the version of the monkey band at Clandon Park, Guildford.
Photo: © National Trust / Helen Rowse

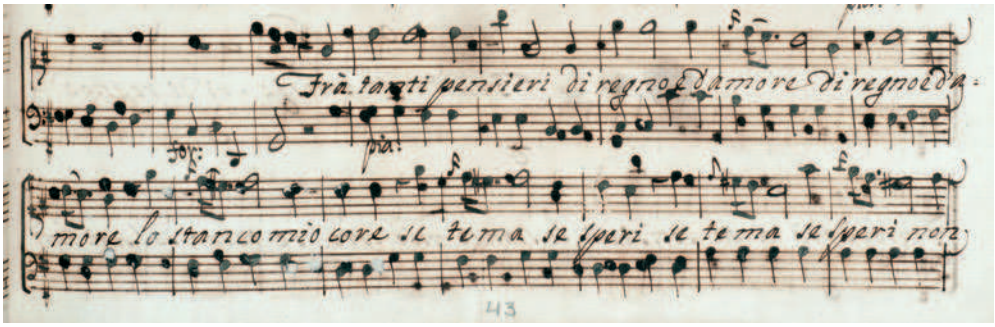



fig. 6: J. A. Hasse, *Demetrio*, the beginning of the aria "Fra tanti pensieri". D-Dl Mus. 2477-F-108, harpsichord part, p. 43.
Photo: © Sächsische Landesbibliothek – Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Dresden

24 *Distinguished Collection* 2002: 164–5, lot 144. Also this music does not come from any of Hasse's operas first produced between 1730 and 1745.

25 On this production see Schmidt-Hensel 2009, II: 179–96. The aria survives in eight different sources.

26 Ibid., 268, 283–86. No complete score of the 1732 version survives. The Dresden aria collection is Sächsische Landesbibliothek – Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Dresden, Ms. Mus. 2477-F-108. Another German source for "Fra tanti pensieri" is Rostock, Universitätsbibliothek, Mus. Saec. XVIII:40|1|1.

Once more we can only speculate when and why this aria was chosen for this version of the monkey band, but it seems significant that it was again an aria sung by Bordoni, and that an aria was depicted that was not actually performed in the Dresden production of *Demetrio*. If the Rhode Island version of the monkey band was indeed made in 1766 to coincide with the Berlin production of *Lucio Papirio*, then in both cases an aria was shown that was not actually heard on stage. In the latter case Bordoni did not even participate in that production. However, the music on these pieces did exist in Dresden at the time, and it may be that these arias were still known well enough there for them to be recognised by the viewers of these porcelain objects; perhaps because Bordoni continued to sing these pieces at other occasions.

3. The fox at the harpsichord

The best known Meissen figure group associated with Hasse and Bordoni—although it, too, has not been discussed in the musicological literature—shows a fox playing a harpsichord, with a woman leaning backwards in a chair listening to or singing with the animal.[27] In fact, precisely because this group has been described as one "deren Sinn sich nicht entschlüsseln läßt", is why it provides a good case for analysing how identifications and associations could arise—both during the eighteenth century and more recently—, either via textual and musical sources or in more tenuous ways.[28]

Two different versions of the piece are known. One, only known from a copy now at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, has a music stand on the harpsichord with a piece of music on it (*fig. 7*). The other version, of which copies are in the Residenz-Museum in Munich and in the collection of the Pauls-Eisenbeiss foundation in Basle, lacks this music stand but is largely similar otherwise (*fig. 8*).[29] The first description

fig. 7: *The fox at the harpsichord*. Royal Meissen Porcelain Factory, 1743–44. Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. 64.101.125; gift of Irwin Untermyer, 1964.
Photo: © The Metropolitan Museum of Art

27 The only mention I am aware of in the musicological literature is a passing reference in a Fux bibliography (Schubert 1992: 278).

28 The quotation is from Menzhausen 1993: 55.

29 Respectively: Munich, Residenz-Museum, Erste Porzellankammer, R. 82; Basle, Pauls-Eisenbeiss collection, on loan to the Museum für Wohnkultur (illustrated ibid., 118–19).

fig. 8: *The fox at the harpsichord*. Royal Meissen Porcelain Factory, 18th century. Collection Pauls-Eisenbeiss Foundation, on display at the Museum für Wohnkultur in Basle.
Photo: © HMB – Historisches Museum Basel, Depositum der Pauls-Eisenbeiss-Stiftung Basel / J. Karpinski

of the piece occurs in the *Taxa* between 1740 and 1745: "1. Groupgen, einen Fuchß auff dem Clav-Cymbel vorstellend, welcher spielt, dem ein dabey auf dem Stuhle sizendes Frauenzim[m]er zuhöret." Although not explicitly dated, it appears well before 21 November 1744, the first dated entry that follows it.[30]

In the *Taxa* the female figure is not even described as a singer, but her slightly opened mouth—teeth are visible in the version in New York—and the musical context of the statuette as a whole clearly suggest she is singing (*fig. 9*). Although she is now routinely identified as Faustina Bordoni, this is far from evident from the object itself. The reason for this association is ultimately the music stand in the copy in New York. The music is there shown as composed for "Sr: Bindi" in the opera "Antigono" by "Sr: Hasse" (*fig. 10*). The aria in question, "Benché giusto a vendicarmi", appears indeed as a number for Alessandro in act III of Hasse's *Antigono*, composed on a new libretto by Metastasio.

fig. 9: Detail of the piece shown in fig. 7.
Photo: © The Metropolitan Museum of Art

fig. 10: Detail of the piece shown in fig. 7.
Photo: © The Metropolitan Museum of Art

The opera had initially been planned for a performance in October 1743 (the month of the Elector of Saxony's birthday), but was apparently not finished in time and

30 Rafael 2009: 58, nr. 166. The first nr. after 21 November is 203.

therefore postponed until the following carnival season, when it premiered on 20 January 1744 in the court theatre. Parts or all of it were rehearsed on 9, 13, and 16 January in the Electress's chambers, and on 18 January in the theatre.[31] The cast list, known from the printed libretto for that performance and several musical sources, confirms that Alessandro was indeed sung by the castrato Giovanni Bindi, while Bordoni sang the part of Berenice. The date of the opera and the description of the piece in the Meissen archives both date it to 1743 or early 1744. The music on the music stand is given as a reduced score: the first two systems for keyboard (or *basso continuo* and violins), followed by a final single staff with just the voice part. The music was probably copied from precisely the kind of reduced score that is still kept in Dresden (*fig. 11*).

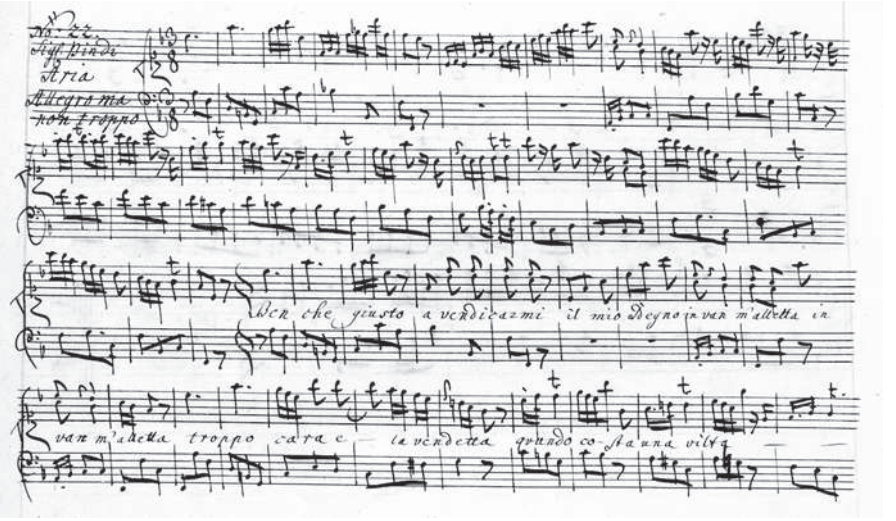

Sig.r Bindi
Aria
Allegro ma
non troppo
Ben che giusto a vendicarmi il mio Regno in van m'alletta in
van m'alletta troppo cara e la vendetta quando co-sta una vita

fig. 11: J. A. Hasse, *Antigono*, the beginning of the aria "Benché giusto a vendicarmi". D-Dl Mus. 2477-F-43, p. 88.
Photo: © Sächsische Landesbibliothek – Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Dresden

Most of the information on the piece's connection to Hasse's opera was presented in 1952 in an article by Yvonne Hackenbroch, when it was still in the private Untermyer collection. The woman is there described as "a lady with aged features" who a little later surreptitiously becomes Faustina Bordoni without much further evidence or argument, but rather, one presumes, because she sang in the opera and was married to Hasse.[32] That the woman was meant to represent Faustina has been repeated over the years, especially with reference to the Untermyer/Metropolitan Museum variant.[33] The idea that the fox could be an allusion to a specific musician is older however. It first appears in print, as far as I know, in a 1912 guide to the Munich porcelain collection (i.e. with reference to the version without the sheet music), where the author states: "große sogen[annte] Krinolinengruppe: der Fuchs am Spinett. Sehr frühes Meißener Modell, das nur in dieser einen Ausformung bekannt ist, wahrscheinlich ebenfalls von Kändler. Die Gruppe bezieht

31 For dates, sources, and musical incipits see Schmidt-Hensel 2009, II: 619–43.
32 Hackenbroch 1952: 63–64.
33 Röntgen 1996: 151: "The lady is supposed to be the court singer Faustina Hasse-Bordoni", as well as further examples cited below.

sich wohl auf irgend einen historischen Vorgang am sächsischen Hofe. Vielleicht liegt eine satyrische Bezugnahme auf einen Komponisten namens Fuchs vor"[34] (since "Fuchs" means "fox" in German). This idea that the fox at the harpsichord stood for the Viennese court composer Johann Joseph Fux, or some other musician named Fux, also stuck over the years, and it was repeated several times in guidebooks of the Munich collection.[35]

This makes some sense, given that the versions in Munich and Basle do not have the sheet music of Hasse's opera, but Fux had in any case died in 1741, before this piece was made, and it seems unlikely that it was intended to mock him posthumously.[36] If on the other hand, as Hackenbroch wrote, "an identification of Hasse with the harpsichord-playing fox is reasonable", then why was he represented as a fox? Along the lines of the pun "Fux = fox", to his German public Hasse's name may have recalled rather that of a hare ("Hase" or sometimes "Haass").[37] If, because of the sheet music, the figure seated at the harpsichord was indeed understood to stand for Hasse, then the 'hare' had become a fox. There is some reason to believe that this conceit was, if not in the mind of Kändler when he sculpted the piece, at least available to its early viewers.

The fox was, wholly in line with Æsop, almost invariably seen as cunning.[38] Furthermore, the pairing of fox and hare was also common. The two animals occur together in a range of German proverbs and sayings. Particularly relevant is the saying that "man kann nicht Hase und Fuchs zugleich sein".[39] Still more pertinent, also its direct opposite was used, namely the conceit of being, or needing to be, "at once a hare and a fox".[40] One version of this saying, "Du must fuchs vnnd hase sein, weiss vnd schwartz können", was known as early as the sixteenth century.[41] As this expression suggests, the notion of being able to unite in oneself the traits of the hare and the fox was akin to the capacity for dissimulation. Hence, it is not surprising to find it being used in relation to life at court.

34 Hofmann 1912: 22, illustrated as plate 10.

35 *Residenz-Museum* 1964: 30: "fox at the cembalo (a reference to Fuchs, conductor of the orchestra at Dresden court)"; Neumann 2001: 130: it "may be a cover allusion to […] Johann Joseph Fux (meaning fox) and the celebrated singer Faustina Bordoni"; Röntgen 1996: 151, writes that "at first it was thought to be a mockery of the Viennese Court Conductor Johann Joseph Fux".

36 Already Hackenbroch 1952: 65, 58, wrote that, "for obvious reasons, it was assumed that the fox was meant as a pun on the name of Fux", but then argues that this is in fact unlikely. See also Menzhausen 1993: 55, on the unlikelihood of the fox being Fux.

37 To give just one example, on 7 July 1731 the court's *Oberhofmarschall* (major-domo) wrote in his journal about the arrival of "der neue Capellmeister Haass" with his wife, an orthography he kept using (see Landmann 2012: 5).

38 A few examples may suffice. The relevant lemma in Sartorius 1718: 69–73, states first "Der Fuchs ist so ein listig Thier / Wie die Erfahrung gibet dir", and later "Der Fuchs ist ein listiges schalckhafftiges Thier über alle andere / welches sich auf allerhand Vortheile und Listigkeiten leget / seines Raubes theilhafftig zu werden". In Lemery 1721: 1212 (the German version of Lemery's *Pharmacopée universelle*) the fox is likewise described as "ein vierfüßiges Thier, wild, schlau und listig".

39 Listed as nr. 97 *ad vocem* "Hase" in Wander 1867–80, II: 371. Translation: "one cannot be a hare and a fox at the same time".

40 Ibid., II: 371, nr. 103: "Man muss Haass vnd Fuchs sein können"; II: 376, nr. *224: "Er kann Hase und Fuchs sein"; I: 1249, nr. 222: "Man muss Fuchs und Hase sein, Schwarz und Weiss können" (also as nr. *383); I: 1249, nr. 230: "Oft muss man Fuchs und Hase sein." Given the number of variants this appears to have had more currency than the opposite version. On such opposites see e.g. Peukes 1977: 163, specifically for mention of this case.

41 Wander records it being listed in Franck 1541: 2:87a, and in Henish 1616: 1271. Translation: "One must be able to be a fox and a hare, to do [things] black and white."

In Christoph Lehmann's *Florilegium politicum*—which was originally published during the Thirty-Years War but republished several times, the last time in 1662—we read under the heading "Skilfulness/Learning" (*Geschicklichkeit/Gelährt*): "Der ist geschickt/ der zugleich Fuchß und haaß seyn kan."[42]

Particularly significant for the present context is that the saying also appears in the novel *Musicus magnanimus, oder Pancalus*, written by the German *Kapellmeister* Wolfgang Caspar Printz (1641–1717) and first published in 1691. Once the travelling musician Pancalus has been hired as a viola da gamba player at a Neopolitan nobleman's court, he ruminates:[43]

> Das Hof=Leben ist ein recht wunderliches Leben. Aula, hab ich einmahl in einem Stamm=Buche gelesen/ est Paradisus vulpium, Purgatorium divitum & Infernus simplicium: Das Hof=Leben ist der Füchse Paradeiß/ der Reichen Fegefeuer/ und der Einfältigen Hölle

In short, "das Simuliren ist die vornehmste Hof=Tugend".[44] When he asks the Italian castrato serving as the nobleman's *maestro di cappella* for advice, the latter explains that one must be a *politicus*, and that a *politicus* is someone who is able to play all parts:

> Ein Politicus, antwortete er/ ist ein solcher Mensch/ der GOtt also dienet/ daß er den Teufel nicht offendire: Er ist ein Mann/ der sich in alle Höfe/ in alle Städte/ zu allen Leuten/ und in alle Zeiten zu schicken weiß; der zugleich ein Fuchs und Haaß ist; lincks und rechts: der predigen kan/ wenn er gleich nicht drauff studiret hat [etc.][45]

Printz continues this chapter on "Life at Court" *(Hof=Leben)* with this vulpine language, speaking of foxes, fox tails, and overall "fox-tailing" *(Fuchsschwäntzerey)*, with which he means the scheming and conniving practiced there.

Although the novel was first published half a century before the porcelain statuette was made, it is noteworthy that in 1714 an anonymous new edition had been printed—purportedly in Freiburg but actually in Dresden—as *Der großmüthige Musicant Pancalus* (*fig. 12*).[46] Given the popularity of Printz's musician novels (testified among other things by reprints like this one), the almost zoomorphic insistence on foxes in the chapter on "Life at Court", the musical context of the novel, and the Dresden reprint of the book, there seems to be at least the possibility that Kändler got the idea of the musician fox from this book.

42 Lehmann 1662: 318. Translation: "he is skilled, who is able to be a fox and a hare at once."

43 I cite from the edition *Der großmüthige Musicant* 1714: 198–99 (a modern edition is Printz 1974). Translation: "Life at court is a truly curious life. 'Aula', I once read in an *album amicorum*, 'est paradisus vulpium, purgatorium divitum & infernus simplicium'. Life at court is a paradise for foxes, a purgatory for the wealthy, and a hell for the simple."

44 Ibid., 199. Translation: "simulation is the most important virtue at court."

45 Ibid., 202. Translation: "A *politicus* is the kind of person who serves God without offending the devil; he is a man who at every court, in every city, to all people, and at all times knows how to fit in; who is at once a fox and a hare; left and right; who can preach without having studied for it." This passage was previously quoted in Zohn 2011: 414–15, which provides further context on the book and its genre.

46 The only known copy is at the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin Preußischer Kulturbesitz. The book's publisher, Johann Christoph Miethen, worked in the shop and married one of the daughters of the Dresden printer Christian Bergen (see already Schöttgen 1740: 18). On this edition see Printz 1974: 529–30.

fig. 12: Frontispiece and titlepage of *Der großmüthige Musicant Pancalus, Oder Musicus Magnanimus* (1714).
Photo: © Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin Preußischer Kulturbesitz

Nevertheless, the identification of the fox with Hasse may well have been unintended by its maker. There is after all an evident discrepancy between the fact that the aria was sung by Bindi but that the statuette shows a fox and a woman. Furthermore, we do not know if the version with or without the sheet music was the earlier version.[47] Kändler's sources and intentions are perhaps less important than the interpretations that may have been available to contemporary viewers. Certainly Hasse's privileged position at the Electoral court in Dresden—exemplified by the fact that, as Daniel Heartz has pointed out, when *Antigono* was staged "Hasse had only directed performances of his own operas (except for Pergolesi's *La serva padrona*) and the only prima donna who sang in them at Dresden was his wife"—will have led some to revile him and Bordoni. It does not require a large leap of the imagination to see how to the disgruntled Hasse very much resembled the conniving foxes in Printz's novel.[48]

47 The reason that this particular aria was chosen is also not clear: from the opera's surviving musical sources and reports on its performance there is no evidence that it was particularly popular.

48 Heartz 2003: 337.

4. Conclusion: celebrity, conversation, and porcelain

The production of *Antigono* appears also to have inspired a second porcelain statuette. A new group of "2. singende Oper Füguren […] ein Frauen Zimmer und eine Mannes Person in gewöhnlichem Habit" is listed in Kändler's work reports in March 1744, and it is also included in the *Taxa* (*fig. 13*).[49] The male figure may have been inspired by Gio-

fig. 13: *Two opera singers*. Royal Meissen Porcelain Factory, 1744 (?).
Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. 64.101.56; gift of Irwin Untermyer, 1964.
Photo: © The Metropolitan Museum of Art

vanni Bindi in the role of Alexander I of Epirus, or Domenico Anibali in the role of his son Demetrius, but because the piece is more generic than the fox at the harpsichord no similar discourse has persisted or sprung up around this piece. As with other pieces, an association of the female singer with Faustina Bordoni is too speculative to be given much (historical) credence.[50] It was doubtless the combination of the iconographic

49 Pietsch 2002: 102: "Eine Neue Crouppe welche 2. singende Oper Füguren Vorstellet als ein Frauen Zimmer und eine Mannes Person in gewöhnlichem Habit." Rafael 2009: 60, nr. 178: "1. Grouppe aus 2. Opera Figuren bestehend, davon eine in singender action in einem sehr sauber gestickten Kleide auch 2. Flügeln, nebst Palatin, die andere als Manns Person in Römischen Habit mit Casquet und Feder auf dem Haupte nebst langen Talar singende vorgestellet, 16 Thlr." See on Kändler's opera figures Menzhausen 1993: 50–56. The Pauls-Eisenbeiss copy is illustrated ibid., 117.

50 Menzhausen 1993: 51, is particularly keen to identify Faustina, suggesting a connection of two further porcelain statuettes with her, but for neither is there much evidence.

'puzzle' of the fox, the identifiable sheet music, and the fame of Hasse and Bordoni that resulted in a lasting discourse around that particular porcelain group and not others.

Beyond the issue of the identification of the fox and the lady, the evident urge *for* an identification—which is so constant in modern descriptions of the object—is significant. For the English context during the same period there are similar tenuous identifications with specific actors of more or less generic porcelain figures.[51] This tendency to look for a precise identification was perhaps shared by eighteenth-century viewers of these objects: in fact, generating conversation and stimulating witticisms may have been part of their *raison d'être*. Maureen Cassidy-Geiger has shown the connections of such porcelain figures to sugar sculptures, and their ample use on the ceremonial dessert table at the Saxon court.[52] More broadly, Anna Somers Cocks has written in relation to eighteenth-century England that "visiting the china closet must have been one of the entertainments of a country house".[53] We know little about the function or destination of the particular pieces discussed in this article. One version of the fox at the harpsichord is listed at the Electoral palace in Mannheim in 1800, when it was packed in a crate along with many other pieces of porcelain in order to be shipped to Munich, but nothing more is known.[54]

Still, while English visitors to a country house could, for instance, have recognised the famous English actor David Garrick (1717–1779) in porcelain figures showing his precisely sculpted face or his costumes in some of his best-known roles (which were both known through printed images), the objects discussed in this article require musical literacy to achieve their full effect. The only precise topical references they appear to contain are the written names of musicians ("Faustina", "Hasse", "Bindi"), the titles of operas by Hasse or characters from them, and exact musical quotations. Especially in light of this latter element they seem to be directed at a more restricted audience of musical connoisseurs than their English counterparts. Together, the names, musical quotations, and amusing or puzzling iconographies could have been a starting point for word games, wit, and inventive associations (in the sort of interpretative process suggested above for the fox at the harpsichord). These were all qualities admired and cultivated in galant conversation at least since the days of Baldassare Castiglione's *Book of the courtier*, and they continued to be the hallmarks of eighteenth-century sociability.[55]

Given Hasse's and Bordoni's prominence in Dresden's musical life, they were likely subjects of conversation and gossip. In the part of Berenice in her husband's *Antigono*, Faustina played the love interest of Alexander, Demetrius, and Antigonus alike. Parts like those may have aided eighteenth-century jokes about her supposed amorous escapades. Still, it is remarkable how much gratuitous and rather misogynist gossip about Faus-

51 McPherson 2014: 200–201 for examples.

52 Cassidy-Geiger 2007 and 2010. See also Le Corbeiller 1992.

53 Somers Cocks 1989: 211, for the quotation and more generally for the notion that these pieces could serve for the entertainment of guests. See also Le Corbeiller 1992.

54 Ellwardt 2007: 94. This may well be the piece that is now in the Residenz-Museum (see n. 29).

55 On the art of conversation see Quondam 2007, as well as e.g. Lilti 2005: *passim* on wit (*esprit*) as a defining charactistic of eighteenth-century salon culture.

tina has crept even into modern descriptions of the fox at the harpsichord. Hackenbroch first talks of Faustina's purported "well-known flirtations" in the context of the object. A 1992 exhibition catalogue alleges on no basis that "besides her fame as a singer, Faustina was celebrated for a long-standing love affair with a certain Herr Fuchs (fox)", a statement echoed in another exhibition catalogue from 2009 where it is said that "Faustina had a well-publicized love affair" with one "Herr Fuchs", whereas Röntgen in his book on Meissen writes that she was "known for her explosive temper".[56] For none of these statements does any eighteenth-century evidence exist. Rather, they fit a long-standing cultural trope of opera stars as capricious "divine monsters".[57] Even the Munich/Basle variant of the object, which does not have the identifying sheet music, has now by mere association with the New York statuette become bound up with Faustina Bordoni.[58]

While there is some reason to argue that the fox could have been interpreted as Hasse at least in the case of the version with the sheet music, the reasons for an association with Faustina are more tenuous. Yet she has now, in a fashion, been grafted almost indelibly onto the object through her celebrity and the discourse surrounding her and the object. However, although some problems of identification (of music and/or people) remain, and the precise reasons for including these musical fragments are often not known, there nevertheless seems to be a pattern of arias by Hasse that were sung by Bordoni being depicted on Meissen porcelain objects. Precisely their presence on these expensive yet mundane objects provides eloquent testimony of the position of Johann Adolf Hasse, his operas, and Faustina Bordoni in the shared cultural background of the Meissen-buying classes of early eighteenth-century Germany (and Europe).

56 Respectively Hackenbroch 1952: 58; *Figures from Life* 1992: 56–57; *Watteau, Music and Theater* 2009: 125–26, in a catalogue entry by Jeffrey Munger; Röntgen 1996: 151.

57 See Poriss 2014.

58 Also Neumann 2001: 130, writes that the piece "may be a covert allusion to the liaison between the Viennese Court bandmaster, Johann Joseph Fux (meaning fox), and the celebrated singer Faustina Bordoni".

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Auctores

Jordi Ballester,

Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Departament d'Art i de Musicologia, 08193 Bellaterra (Barcelona), Spain <jordi.ballester@uab.cat>

Emily W. Gephart,

Tufts University, School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Visual and Critical Studies, 230, the Fenway, Boston, MA 02115, U.S.A. < emily.gephart@smfa.edu>

Amy Gillette,

Temple University, Tyler School of Art, 2001 North 13th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19122, U.S.A <amy.gillette@temple.edu>

Stefania Gitto,

Fondazione Scuola di Musica di Fiesole o.n.l.u.s., 24, via delle Fontanelle, 50014 San Domenico di Fiesole, Italy <s.gitto@scuolamusica.fiesole.fi.it>

Melissa L. Mednicov,

Sam Houston State University, Department of Art, Box 2089, Huntsville, TX 77341, U.S.A. <mmednicov@shsu.edu>

Suzanne Singletary,

Philadelphia University, College of Architecture and the Built Environment, School House Lane and Henry Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19144, U.S.A. <singletarys@philau.edu>

Huub van der Linden,

University College Roosevelt, Arts & Humanities, P.O. Box 94, 4330 AB Middelburg, The Netherlands <h.linden@ucr.nl>

* * *

Antonio Baldassarre,

Hochschule Luzern – Musik, Zentralstrasse 18, 6003 Luzern, Switzerland <antonio.baldassarre@hslu.ch>

Cristina Bordas,

Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Departamento de Musicología, Calle Profesor Aranguren s/n, Ciudad Universitaria, 28040 Madrid, Spain <cbordas@musicologia.com>

Gabriela Currie,

University of Minnesota, School of Music, 166 Ferguson Hall, 2106 – 4th Street South, Minneapolis, MN 55455, U.S.A. <ilnit001@umn.edu>

Nicoletta Guidobaldi,

Università di Bologna, Campus di Ravenna, Dipartimento di Beni Culturali, via degli Ariani, 1, 48121 Ravenna, Italy <nicoletta.guidobaldi@unibo.it>

Anne Leonard,

University of Chicago, Department of Art History & Smart Museum of Art, 5550 S. Greenwood Avenue, Chicago, IL 60637, U.S.A. <aleonard@uchicago.edu>

Tim Shephard,

University of Sheffield, Department of Music, Jessop Building, 34 Leavygreave Road, Sheffield, S3 7RD, United Kingdom <t.shephard@sheffield.ac.uk>

Björn R. Tammen,

Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Institut für kunst- und musikhistorische Forschungen, Dr. Ignaz Seipel-Platz 2, 1010 Wien, Austria <bjoern.tammen@oeaw.ac.at>

Philippe Vendrix,

Université François-Rabelais de Tours, Centre d'Études Supérieures de la Renaissance, 59, rue Néricault-Destouches, BP 12050, 37020 Tours Cedex 1, France <vendrix@univ-tours.fr>